

Australian Gulf War Veterans Contaminated with Uranium

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Stop Uranium Wars.Blogspot

The Uranium Medical Research Centre (UMRC) in Canada, working in conjunction with DUSK Australia (Depleted Uranium Silent Killer) has tested Australian service personnel who served in the Gulf during 1991 and determined that they have been exposed to health-endangering levels of uranium contamination, presumably from exposure to Depleted Uranium weapons.

<http://www.stopuraniumwars.blogspot.com/>

SYDNEY (April 20, 2007) — Australian service personnel who served in the Gulf during 1991 have tested positive for uranium contamination. The Uranium Medical Research Centre (UMRC) in Canada, working in conjunction with DUSK Australia (Depleted Uranium Silent Killer) has tested a representative from the Australian Navy and a representative from the Australian Army. The uranium isotope analysis on their urine was carried out at the J.W. Goethe University in Germany and confirms depleted uranium contamination.

To date, the Australian Government has not acknowledged the possibility that Australian service personnel could be contaminated with uranium. However, scientific research reveals that Iraq is highly contaminated with the radioactive fallout from depleted uranium weapons. The positive tests of these Australian veterans, reveals that they are still excreting uranium through their kidneys, fifteen years after their return from Gulf War 1.

The Australian veterans in this test case are ill. They exhibit multiple health problems from their exposure to radiological warfare. Their intimate partners suffer health problems and so do their children. The contamination of Iraq has resulted in an explosion of cancer, leukaemia and birth defects among the local civilian population.

Depleted uranium is highly toxic and radioactive waste. It is a by-product of the enrichment process that prepares uranium for use in nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons. This radioactive waste is denser and heavier than lead. It is manufactured into bunker busters that can penetrate deep into the earth and into the most powerful anti tank weapons available in the arms market today.

The Australian debate about embracing nuclear power technology, has omitted the inextricable link between uranium mining and uranium weapons. The proliferation of nuclear weapons causes concern, but depleted uranium weapons, are used daily in conflicts across the world.

The nuclear industry exists on the understanding that radioactive contamination is safely contained within nuclear facilities. The ethics of recycling radioactive waste into weapons and shooting it into another countries' backyard is missing from this debate. When depleted uranium weapons are fired, they immediately flare off uranium particles that can be ingested and inhaled. They lodge in the lung and other organs, irradiating the victim from the inside.

There are repercussions for all Australians now that Australian service personnel have tested positive for uranium contamination. The Uranium Medical Research Centre is concerned about blood products and organ donations from persons known or suspected to be exposed to depleted uranium.

Uranium weapons are illegal. They fail the four rules derived from the whole of humanitarian law regarding weapons.

1. Weapons may only be used in the legal field of battle. 2. Weapons can only be used for the duration of the armed conflict. 3. Weapons must not be unduly inhumane 4. Weapons may not have an unduly negative effect on the natural environment.

Depleted uranium is radioactive for 4.5 billion years.

Therefore, uranium weapons cannot be contained on the legal battlefield, nor within the timeframe of the battle. The birth defects exhibited by babies born after the conflict and the explosion of cancers afflicting civilians is evidence of the inhumanity of these weapons. The radioactive particles will drift across countries and around the world, contaminating air, water, soil and all life forms.

Australians are at risk at home. The Senate Hansard reveals that we have imported from the United States 34,000 depleted uranium weapons. The Australian Navy has used these weapons in training off the Australian coast. There are no records available to the public to identify 'when or where' these weapons were expended. Wind patterns at the time of the training exercises would reveal communities at risk of contamination.

In 2003 the Australian Government opened up all of our defence training areas to the United States. There is ship to shore and air to ground bombing near Perth in Western Australia at the Lancelin Defence Training Area. In January 2006 the United States began flying in from Guam for regular bombing of the Northern Territory. This occurs just west of Katherine at the Delemere bombing range. The Shoalwater Bay defence training area in Queensland includes a section of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. It will host the largest joint Australian US military training exercise in June, Talisman Sabre 2007.

The Australian Government is adamant that no uranium weapons are being used, however no testing of water and soil is being done to reassure the public that uranium weapons have not and will not be used. The Australian Defence Force has purchased the M1A1 tank that is shielded in depleted uranium. The patent of the Hellfire 11 missile reveals a "dense metal" warhead of tungsten or uranium alloy. It is being imported from the United States for use with the Australian Tiger Helicopter, currently being manufactured in Brisbane.

As a result of the uranium contamination of Australian Army and Navy personnel, it is time for Australia to rethink the export of uranium. Government safeguards assuring us that Australian uranium is only used for 'peaceful' purposes are simply an illusion of protection. Once our uranium is exported, it can be mixed with uranium from other countries. In the gaseous diffusion that separates enriched and depleted uranium, it is not possible to isolate Australia's uranium. We export uranium to the United States, the world's largest manufacturer and exporter of arms.

Estimates reveal that up to 800 tons of radioactive waste (depleted uranium) was dumped on Iraq during Gulf War 1. There is an estimate of about 1,100 tons used in Gulf War 2 and the bombing continues.

How many Australian service personnel are contaminated? How will this affect the Australian civilian population? It is time to take seriously the undiagnosed illnesses of Australian Gulf War veterans who have been deployed to a radioactive theatre of war. It is time to address the sickness of their partners and their children. It is time to look carefully at what is happening on Australia's defence training areas. From uranium mines to uranium weapons: Has Australia's uranium unleashed a public health catastrophe?

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